# COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

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*COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS is intended to provide quick updates on issues of interest to members and affiliates of the Council of Ontario Universities (COU). It is produced regularly throughout the academic year. This issue covers the months of May and June 2004.*

## 2004 Ontario Budget: Bob Rae to lead postsecondary education review

On May 18, 2004, the Ontario government announced that former Ontario premier Bob Rae will conduct a comprehensive review of the postsecondary education system and recommend ways to help ensure that it is high quality, accountable and affordable. Budget measures for higher education, in the interim, include compensation to postsecondary institutions for a substantial portion of the revenue shortfalls from both years of the tuition fee freeze and for improvements to the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) that will benefit 50,000 students seeking postsecondary opportunities. OSAP improvements include a $20.9 million enhancement to OSAP in 2004-2005 and eligibility reforms that will better harmonize the Ontario and Canada student assistance programs to increase access to student loans.

Ontario universities welcomed the appointment of Mr. Rae to conduct this postsecondary education review, as well as the improvements to OSAP and the commitment to funding for the second year of the tuition freeze. However, universities were disappointed with the lack of certainty about how these funds will be incorporated into a longer-term funding framework and the fact that the Quality Assurance Fund was not increased, as anticipated in the 2003 budget announcement. The Council press release noted that some universities will likely need to introduce further austerity measures that will affect the number of courses available to students and the range of academic and administrative services that support the quality of their learning experiences. Ontario universities are confident, however, that the Rae review will point to a need for reinvestment in Ontario universities.

## Ministry funds nursing education and clinical education projects

In March 2004, the Council of Ontario University Programs in Nursing (COUPN) received over $900,000 in funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care as the second of three installments of a multi-year, $2 million commitment. This funding will enable COUPN to establish projects that promote innovation in nursing education to prepare practitioners for the changing health care system, and that increase access to clinical education for nursing students and continuing education for working nurses and primary care nurse practitioners. These projects will focus on summer externship programs, development of clinical placement databases, evaluation of COUPN Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner (PHCNP) education programs, development of PHCNP continuing education, and flexible scheduling of educational opportunities.

In addition, in the 2004 Ontario Budget, the government announced the establishment of a Nursing Faculty Fund, totalling $10 million over four years, to increase enrolment in graduate nursing programs that will start up in 2004-2005.

## Queen's University Principal Bill Leggett stepping down

On June 30, 2004, Bill Leggett will retire as the17th Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University, a position that he has held since 1994. Concurrent with his principalship, Dr. Leggett was also Professor in the Department of Biology. Prior to his appointment at Queen's, he served as Chair of the Department of Biology, then Dean of Science and Vice-Principal (Academic) at McGill University.

Dr. Leggett is an international authority on the population dynamics of inland and ocean fish populations, and particularly on the coupling between physical processes in the sea and the dynamics of fish survival and migrations. From 1989 to 1991, he headed a $25-million Federal Centres of Excellence Program – the Ocean Production Enhancement Network. At Queen's, he continued to direct a major research team in this area.

His honours include honorary doctorates from four universities, the D.W. Webster Award of Merit, the Fry Medal of the Canadian Society of Zoologists, the Award of Excellence in Fisheries Education, the Distinguished Biologist Award of the Canadian Council of University Biology Chairs, and both the Oscar A. Sette Award and the 1997 Award of Excellence from the American Fisheries Society.

Dr. Leggett has served on the boards of several charitable foundations, has been a member of numerous government and private-sector committees and commissions, and has served as an advisor in his field to governments and the private sector. He is a graduate of Waterloo University College (BA, 1962), the University of Waterloo (MSc in zoology, 1965) and McGill University (PhD in zoology, 1969).

Dr. Leggett will be succeeded by Dr. Karen Hitchcock, former President of the University of Albany in New York.

## Ontario Finance Minister featured speaker at business forum

On June 4, 2004, the Office for Partnerships for Advanced Skills (OPAS) will present its 2004 Business Leaders' Forum, featuring Greg Sorbara, Ontario's Minister of Finance, as its guest speaker. The Minister will deliver an address entitled *Education, Knowledge and the Next Generation of Economic Growth in Ontario* and, following his remarks, will participate in an informative question-and-answer period. This year's event, to be held at the Toronto Board of Trade, will be attended by an estimated 150 invited guests from the universities, industry and government. OPAS will also use the session to announce a new partnership agreement with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, which will allow members of the organizations to work together more effectively.

## Pamela Wallin named recipient of 2004 OPAS Visionary Award

OPAS has announced that Pamela Wallin, Canada's Consul General in New York, will be the recipient of the 2004 Visionary Award and the featured speaker at the 2004 Visionary Seminar on November 8, 2004. Ms. Wallin will present her address, *Canada-U.S. Relations – the View from New York*, to an in-house audience of faculty, students and local business leaders at the University of Toronto. The event will be broadcast live via satellite and web cast to university campuses across Canada. This year's seminar will be the eighth in a series of Visionary Seminars.

## Claire Morris appointed new President of AUCC

Effective April 5, 2004, Claire Morris assumed the role of President and CEO of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) for a five-year term. Prior to her appointment, Ms. Morris was Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs in the Privy Council Office. She joined the federal government in 1998, serving as Associate Deputy Minister and then as Deputy Minister of Human Resources Development Canada, Deputy Minister of Labour and concurrently Chair of the Employment Insurance Commission. Before that, she was New Brunswick's top-ranked civil servant, serving as Secretary to the provincial Cabinet and Clerk of the Executive Council.

Ms. Morris has a long-standing interest in Canada's universities, having served as a member of the Board of Governors of St. Thomas University in Fredericton, as a sessional lecturer at that university as well as at the Université de Moncton, and as guest lecturer at Queen's University. She was also Vice-Chair of the Advisory Board to the Faculty of Administration at the University of New Brunswick and Chair of the Maritime Rhodes Scholarship Selection Committee.

Ms. Morris succeeds Robert J. Giroux, who retired after leading AUCC since 1995.

## Summer Institute on Learning Technologies scheduled for August

From August 17 to 19, 2004, OPAS and its industry partners will present the annual Summer Institute on Learning Technologies. The sixth-annual Institute, designed to assist university and college instructors who want to enhance their teaching, will provide exposure to new developments in the field and an opportunity to exchange best practices, as well as enable participants to obtain hands-on experience with relevant technologies. Participants will be selected by the vice-president academic of their institution. The three-day event will be held at the Markham facilities of Sun Microsystems. For more details on the Institute, contact Jan Donio at (416) 979-2165 ext. 262.

## Recommendations of Clinical Placement Advisory Committee endorsed in report

In July 2003, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care established the Clinical Placement Advisory Committee (CPAC) to consider issues regarding the clinical placements of health sciences students in the event of another outbreak of an infectious disease. (During the 2003 SARS outbreak, some students were not able to access their clinical placements.) Members of CPAC included representatives from the Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine, the Council of Ontario University Programs in Nursing, the Ontario Council of University Programs in Rehabilitation Sciences and COU's Office of Health Sciences.

In November 2003, CPAC submitted its report to the Expert Panel on SARS and Infectious Disease Control. Its recommendations covered a variety of issues, such as student attendance in clinical placements during an outbreak, applying government directives to students, protective equipment, communications, "new normal" education, aggregation and migration, and disease prevention. When the Expert Panel released its final report in April 2004, it endorsed two key CPAC recommendations: during an outbreak, all reasonable efforts will be made to keep students in their clinical placement and as part of the department or unit's regular staffing cohort; and for students in placement on units where there is known risk of exposure to life-threatening infectious diseases, the clinical placement agency and the educational facility should come to a mutual agreement as to whether students will be relocated to another unit or area within the same organization.

## OUAC developing new online systems...

### ... For applicants to respond to offers of admission

OUAC is developing a new online system for applicants to respond to offers of admission, to ultimately replace the current method of applicants sending a hard copy document to the Centre where the response is keyed into the applicant database. The new system will be implemented in September 2004 in time to respond for 2005 admission, and by then it is expected that applicants to all undergraduate and teacher education programs will be able to accept or decline an offer of admission via the web. Once this system is in place and integrated into OUAC's existing, highly successful web services, applicants will be able to go online to complete their university application, review and amend their application, and respond to an offer of admission.

In June 2003, a working group consisting of OUAC staff and representatives from seven universities was established to determine how the system would work, aided by input from technical staff from the universities represented in the group. A report on the proposed online system was produced and distributed to all of Ontario's universities for comment and approval. The result was that OUAC received unanimous support for development of the system. The working group's final report was presented to the Ontario Universities' Council on Admission on April 30, 2004, at which time OUAC received endorsement to proceed with the project.

The Centre and the universities are now entering the development phase of the project. Testing of this new system is expected to begin this summer.

### ... For applications for graduate studies

The Centre is also collaborating with a number of Ontario universities to develop online applications for their respective graduate studies. A successful application was implemented in December 2003 for the University of Waterloo, and work has begun for both the University of Windsor and the University of Guelph graduate sites for completion by the end of June 2004 and mid-August 2004, respectively.

Agreements have also been signed with the University of Ottawa and with Brock University, while a needs-assessment worksheet, geared to the development of initial specifications, has been forwarded to both Trent University and Ryerson University for initial specifications development.

The online applications are customized to interface with the individual university's web site, where applicants view the graduate application information area and are then seamlessly transferred to the OUAC system once they are ready to apply. The use of colours and logos gives the applicant the sense that they are still within the host university's web site. Once the application is complete, the information is transferred electronically from OUAC back to the university.

OUAC, in its ongoing partnership with the university community, develops these kinds of projects with individual institutions on a cost-recovery basis. Several universities have also expressed interest in an online application processing for their part-time and internal applicants.

## MTCU Deputy Minister and ADM acknowledged at Council dinner

At a dinner held on May 27, in conjunction with Council's last meeting for the 2003-2004 academic season, Council members acknowledged two departing senior representatives from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU): Kevin Costante who, having served over three and a half years as Deputy Minister, was re-appointed Deputy Minister of Community and Social Services, and Jessica Hill who, having served over two years as Assistant Deputy Minister of the Postsecondary Division, was made Deputy Minister of Children and Youth Services. Bob Christie, who had previously served as Deputy Minister of MTCU, succeeds Mr. Costante. Kevin French, Director of MTCU's Universities Branch, is serving as Acting Assistant Deputy Minister.

## Report submitted on infrastructure requirements of Ontario universities

In February 2004, the Ontario government released a discussion paper, *Building a Better Tomorrow*, which highlighted the need both to improve Ontario's aging public infrastructure and to find more effective and efficient approaches to financing and building these improvements. In response, COU submitted a report, *Ontario Universities' Infrastructure Requirements*, which stressed that in today's knowledge economy higher education will increasingly be the foundation upon which a jurisdiction's prosperity will rest. The report detailed the deferred maintenance backlog for the current infrastructure, identified future infrastructure requirements and presented some financing options. It concluded by emphasizing the key role that strong Ontario universities can play in helping the Ontario government meet the five priorities identified for discussion at Budget Town Halls, 2004. The report is now available on the COU web site (www.cou.on.ca).

## OUPAC members say goodbye to co-chair

At the May 20 meeting of the Ontario Universities' Public Affairs Council (OUPAC), members said goodbye to Co-Chair Sue Bloch-Nevitte, University of Toronto's Director of Public Affairs since 1995. Prior to U of T, Sue was Director of Public Affairs at the University of Calgary for six years, and at the University of Windsor for two years. She was also a member of the communications staff for the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics. In her role as co-chair of OUPAC, Sue was a guiding force in discussions regarding integrated communications and marketing, media relations and issues management. Sue assumes the position of Director of Public Affairs at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

## Three financial reports on Ontario universities recently produced

COU has produced, under the auspices of the Council of Finance Officers-Universities of Ontario (COFO-UO), the following yearly updates of financial and statistical information on Ontario universities:

- *Financial Report of Ontario Universities 2002-03, Volume I – Universities;*
- *Financial Report of Ontario Universities 2002-03, Volume II – Affiliated and Federated Colleges and Universities;* and
- *Compendium of Statistical and Financial Information – Ontario Universities 2002-03*, which provides a broad spectrum of data including financial information (and is now posted on COU's web site, www.cou.on.ca).

## Council bids farewell to several members

At its year-end meeting in May, in addition to William Leggett, Council bid farewell to eight Academic Colleagues:

- Prof. Michael Fox, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Carleton University
- Dr. Birbal Singh, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Lakehead University
- Dr. Huguette Blanco, Director, School of Commerce and Administration, Laurentian University
- Dr. Chad Gaffield, Department of History, University of Ottawa
- Dr. Sanjeev Bhole, Chair, Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, Ryerson University
- Dr. Paul Perron, Principal, University College, University of Toronto
- Dr. Alan Plumtree, Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Waterloo
- Dr. David Dewitt, Director, Centre for International and Security Studies, York University

## OCIA athletics survey recently completed

The Ontario Commission on Interuniversity Athletics (OCIA) recently completed its survey assessing student eligibility for participating in varsity athletics and receiving awards. A summary report, based on data from the completed questionnaires, will be completed in the coming weeks. Additionally, all survey forms are being scrutinized by an OCIA member to confirm compliance.

This year, all 17 universities with athletics departments and the Royal Military College participated in the exercise. Typically, some five or six universities are involved annually. However, because an athletics survey had not been conducted for a couple of years, OCIA members agreed to include all institutions in this review. Survey materials were mailed to athletic directors on April 7, while all completed forms were returned by the deadline of April 30, 2004.

## IMG-Ontario is moving

The Ontario IMG Program and the Assessment Program for IMGs (international medical graduates) are moving. As of June 11, 2004, the new name and address will be:

IMG – ONTARIO
700 Bay Street, Suite 200, Box 332
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1Z6
Phone: (416) 946-0555
Email: img.resources@utoronto.ca
www.oimgc.utoronto.ca

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